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Message Text

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PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 AF-06 ARA-06 EA-07 NEA-10 /091 W
---------- 115572
R 212122Z NOV 75
FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5445
INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON
FAA BRUSSELS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PARIS 30522

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EAIR, FR, UK, US
SUBJ: CIVAIR: MEETING WITH CAVAILLE ON CONCORDE

REF: STATE 274657 (NOTAL)

1. ACCOMPANIED BY MINECON AND RCAA I CALLED ON STATE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION CAVAILLE AT HIS REQUEST NOV. 20 TO DISCUSS CONCORDE. WITH CAVAILLE WAS BRUNEAU, HIS TECHNICAL ADVISER ON CIVAIR MATTERS.

2. CAVAILLE SAID HIS INITIAL REQUEST TO SEE ME (NOV. 12) HAD BEEN PROMPTED BY CONCERN OVER DELAY IN THE ISSUANCE OFIS ANDTHEANNOUNCEMENTOFUSG DECISION ON CONCORDE SERVICE TO US ON WHICH HE HAD HOPED.BE REASSURED PRIOR HIS PARTICIPATION IN 1976 CIVAIR BUDGET DEBATE IN NATIONAL ASSEMBLY. SITUATION WAS NOW CHANGED SINCE IN MEANTIME SECRETARY COLEMAN HAD HELD HIS PRESS CONFERENCE AND DEBATE ON FRENCH CIVAIR BUDGET WAS OVER. NONETHELESS THERE WERE THREE PRINCIPAL AREAS OF CONCERN WHICH HE FELT SHOULD BE DISCUSSED.

3. FIRST, HE WAS CONCERNED OVER POSSIBILITY OF
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STILL FURTHER POSTPONEMENT OF DOT DECISION.

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SECRETARY COLEMAN HAD TOLD HIM IN SEPT. THAT DECISION WOULD BE TAKEN BY THE END OF THAT MONTH, AND THEN LATER IN MONTREAL HAD TOLD HIM DECISION WOULD BE TAKEN BY THE END OF OCTOBER. NOW SECRETARY COLEMAN HAS GIVEN DEADLINE OF FEB. 5 FOR HIS DECISION. CAVAILLE HOPED THIS DEADLINE WAS FIRM AND THERE WOULD BE NO FURTHER SLIPPAGE.

4. SECOND POINT OF CONCERN FOR HIM WAS ACCUMULATION OF CRITICISM OF CONCORDE IN 15 PAGE PAPER WHICH HAD BEEN RELEASED WITH EIS. HE CONSIDERED THAT MUCH IN THIS DOCUMENT WAS "MISLEADING" AND "ABUSIVE", ESPECIALLY THE CONCLUSIONS REACHED. FOR EXAMPLE, STATEMENT THAT CONCORDE OPERATIONS AS PLANNED COULD CAUSE 200 ADDITIONAL CASES OF SKIN CANCER IN US WAS, IN HIS VIEW, UNFOUNDED AND THUS UNNECESSARILY ALARMING FOR PUBLIC OPINION. RE STATEMENT THAT CONCORDE WAS TWICE AS NOISY AS 707, HE SAID THIS SWEEPING JUDGMENT WAS MISLEADING SINCE IT IGNORED DISTINCTION THAT SHOULD BE MADE BETWEEN STATISTICAL CONCLUSIONS DERIVED FROM SCIENTIFIC MEASUREMENT AND ACTUAL DIFFERENCES IN NOISE LEVEL AS CAN BE DISTINGUISHED BY THE HUMAN EAR. ON THIS SAME SUBJECT OF NOISE HE STRESSED THAT A MEREFOUR CONCORDE FLIGHTS A DAY TO JFK, ALL DURING DAYLIGHT HOURS, WOULD BE NEGLIGIBLE IN CONTEXT OF NEARLY A THOUSAND OPERATIONS DAILY AT THAT AIRPORT ALREADY, BOTH DAY AND NIGHT, AND INCLUDING MANY 707'S AND DC-8'S.

5. LASTLY, HE HAD HEARD THAT CONGRESSIONAL VOTE ON AIRPORT DEVELOPMENT LEGISLATION AND HENCE ON ANY ANTI-CONCORDE AMENDMENTS, WHICH WAS EXPECTED TO TAKE PLACE THIS WEEK, MIGHT BE POSTPONED UNTIL DECEMBER. HE WAS CONCERNED LEST CONGRESSIONAL VOTBECLOSE IN TIME TO DATE OF SECRETARY COLEMAN'S PUBLIC HEARINGAND THUSMIGHT HAVE ADVERSE EFFECT THROUGH CONVERGENCE OF EFFORTS OF CONCORDE OPPONENTS INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF CONGRESS. HE ADDED THAT FRENCH PUBLIC OPINION, WHICH WAS EXTREMELY SENSITIVE ON CONCORDE ISSUE, WOULD BE COMPLETELY UNFORGIVING IF IMPRESSION CONFIDENTIAL

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WERE FOSTERED THAT US WAS BEING LESS THAN OBJECTIVE TOWARD CONCORDE, AND THIS COULD HAVE VERY SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR US-FRENCH RELATIONS.

6. I REPLIED AS FOLLOWS ON EACH OF THE ABOVE POINTS:
A) SECRETARY COLEMAN'S BELIEF THAT ANOTHER PUBLIC HEARING SHOULD BE HELD BEFORE HE TOOK HIS FINAL DECISION WAS CLEARLY MOTIVATED BY DESIRE THAT

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HIS DECISION BE ON SOLID ENOUGH GROUNDS TO WITHSTAND
EVENTUAL ATTACK IN THE COURTS. COURT ACTION SETTING
ASIDE OR DELAYING IMPLEMENTATION OF SECRETARY
COLEMAN'S DECISION, ASSUMING HIS DECISION WAS FAVORABLE,

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COULD SERIOUSLY DELAY INAUGURATION OF CONDORDE SERVICE
TO US, WHICH IS WHAT GOF WISHES TO AVOID. IN POSTPONING
EIS PUBLICATION IN THE PAST AND NOW IN FURTHER DELAYING
HIS FINAL DECISION UNTIL AFTER ANOTHER PUBLIC HEARING,
SECRETARY COLEMAN WAS ACTING IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF
THE GOF AS WELL AS THE USG. HE WAS NOW COMMITTED
PUBLICLY TO A SPECIFIC DEADLINE,AND IF HIS DICISION
IS FAVORABLE IT QOULD STILL BE HANDED DOWN IN TIME TO
PERMIT AIR FRANCE TO COMMENCE CONCORDE SERVICE NEXT
APRIL AS PLANNED, AT LEAST TO DIULLES AIRPORT.

B) I DID NOT ATTEMPT TO REBUT CABAILLE DIRECTLY ON
HIS SECOND POINT, ALL THE MORE SO SINCE THE EMBASSY DOES
NOT YET HAVE IN HAND THE 15 AGE SUMMARY DOCUMENT TO
WHICH CAVAILLE WAS ADDRESSING HIMSELF. HOWEVER, I TOLD
HIM THAT FINDINGS OF FACT IN THE REPORT WERE, OF COURSE
OBJECTIVE AND NOT THE RESULT OF ANY POLITICAL OR POLICY
DECISION. IF FRANCE OR TOTHERS WISHED TO REBUT THESE

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FINDINGS, THEY NOW HAD A FULL OPPORTUNITY TO SO SO. IN FACT, FINDINGS OF FACT OF THE HEATHROW NOISE READINGS AND THE PUBLICITY GIVEN RECENTLY TO THESE READINGS,

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ESPECIALLY COMING FROM ONE OF THE CO-PRODUCERS OF THE CONCORDE, HAD HAD A VERY HARMFUL EFFECT ON PUBLIC OPINION IN THE US AND HAD GIVEN NEW AMMUNITION TO ANTI-CONCORDE FORCES.

C) ON THE CONGRESSIONAL ASPECT, I REMINDED CAVAILLE THAT CONGRESS COULD AT ANY TIME SEEK TO ATTACH RIDERS NO MATTER HOW EXTRANEOUS TO ANY PENDING LEGISLATION IN THE HOPE THAT THE AMENDMENT WOULD SLIP THROUGH BY VIRTUE OF THE PRESIDENT'S RELUCTANCE TO VETO MAJOR LEGISLATION SIMPLY IN ORDER TO KILL ONE OBJECTIONABLE AMENDMENT. HOWEVER, IF A FAVORABLE DECISION WERE HANDED DOWN BY SECRETARY COLEMAN AFTER CAREFUL DELIBERATION AND FULL PUBLIC AIRING OF THE ISSUES, IT SEEMED TO ME THAT CONGRESS MIGHT POSSIBLY THEN BE LESS INCLINED TO CONSIDER AND TO ADOPT MEASURES INIMICAL TO CONCORDE. IF SO, THEN DELAY OF ANY CONGRESSIONAL VOTE COULD ALSO BE IN FRANCE'S BEST INTERESTS.

7. CAVAILLE FULLY AGREED THAT HEATHROW PUBLICITY HAD BEEN LAMENTABLE. IT WAS ALL THE MORE OBJECTIONABLE, HE SAID, SINCE HEATHROW NOISE READINGS HAD NOT BEEN MADE IN CONFORMITY WITH ACCEPTED STANDARDS RE POSITIONING OF MEASUREMENT POINTS, ETC. AND SO WERE COMPLETELY MISLEADING. AEROSPATIALE'S CHIEF TEST PILOT FOR CONCORDE PROGRAM HAD TOLD HIM FEW DAYS AGO HE HAD MADE NUMEROUS TAKEOFFS AND LANDINGS WITH CONCORDE AT HEATHROW AND IT WAS A SIMPLE MATTER IN RESPECTING NORMAL FLIGHT PROCEDURES TO REMAIN UNDER PERMISSIBLE NOISE LEVEL FOR THAT AIRPORT. I SUGGESTED THAT IT MIGHT BE WISE TO GIVE MAXIMUM PUBLICITY TO REBUTTAL OF HEATHROW DATA TO HELP OFFSET ADVERSE REACTION OF US PUBLIC OPINION. CAVAILLE AGREED THIS WOULD BE GOOD IDEA AND HE SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS IT WITH HIS BRITISH COLLEAGUE.

8. AS TO THE "OBJECTIVITY" OF USG CONSIDERATION OF THE CONCORDE APPLICATIONS, I SAID THAT WASHINGTON AND THE EMBASSY WERE WELL AWARE OF THE FOREIGN POLICY IMPLICATIONS THE USG DECISION WOULD HAVE. I KNEW THAT SECRETARY KISSINGER WAS PERSONALLY SYMPATHETIC FROM A FOREIGN POLICY VIEWPOINT TO THE FRENCH AND BRITISH CASE,

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AND I RECALLED SPECIFICALLY THE RECENT LETTERS WHICH HE,

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PA-01 PRS-01 USIA-06 AF-06 ARA-06 EA-07 NEA-10 /091 W
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OR THE ACTING SECRETARY IN HIS ABSENCE, HAD WRITTEN TO GOV. CAREY OF NEW YORK AND TO CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS. AT THE RAMBOUILLET SUMMIT I HAD ALSO HAD OCCASION TO DISCUSS CONCORDE PRIVATELY WITH PRESIDENT FORD AND I HAD FOUND HIM TO BE SYMPATHETIC TO THE FOREIGN POLICY ASPECTS OF THE FRENCH AND BRITISH CASE. HOWEVER, I STRESSED, THAT IN THE US THE ISSUE WOULD FINALLY HAVE TO BE DECIDED NOT ON THE BASIS OF FOREIGN POLICY CONSIDERATIONS BUT ON THE BASIS OF WHAT OUR OWN DOMESTIC LEGISLATION WOULD PERMIT AND I THOUGHT THERE WOULD BE LITTLE DISPOSITION TO INTERVENE IN THE DECISION TO BE TAKEN ULTIMATELY IN THE FRAMEWORK OF OUR LEGISLATION BY THE RESPONSIBLE DEPARTMENT, WHICH WAS THAT HEADED BY SECRETARY COLEMAN, IN SO FAR AS THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

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IS CONCERNED.

9. NOTING THAT CAVAILLE WAS PROBABLY ALREADY WELL BRIEFED ON THIS POINT, I DESCRIBED TO HIM THE DIVISION OF POWERS AS BETWEEN THE FEDERAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS IN THE US AND EXPLAINED WHY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, WHILE IT MIGHT SEEK TO INFLUENCE, COULD NOT DICTATE THE DECISION WHICH THE NEW YORK PORT AUTHORITY MUST TAKE
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AS REGARDS CONCORDE ACCESS TO JFK.

10. IN CONCLUSION, I ASSURED CAVAILLE THAT I WAS AVAILABLE TO MEET WITH HIM AT ANY TIME, JUST AS EMBASSY WAS AT HIS FULL DISPOSAL SHOULD HE NEED ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON CONCORDE DEVELOPMENTS IN THE US OR WISH US TO CONVEY TO WASHINGTON AT ANY TIME ANY FURTHER THOUGHTS HE MIGHT HAVE ON THE SUBJECT. CAVAILLE EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THIS OFFER.

11. COMMENT: MY OWN IMPRESSION THAT MEETING WENT WELL WAS CONFIRMED LATER IN THE DAY BY BRUNEAU, WHO TOLD US THAT CAVAILLE WAS VERY SATISFIED WITH THE DISCUSSION. I MUST AGAIN EMPHASIZE THE GREAT IMPORTANCE ATTACHED TO THIS ISSUE BY THE FRENCH AND THE NEED TO KEEP THEM FULLY INFORMED AT ALL TIMES SO THAT, AT A MINIMUM, THEY WILL HAVE CONFIDENCE IN OUR GOOD FAITH.
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